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ABSTRACT

This forum identified some of the factors influencing the emergence of identity during the critical childhood years. To help a child develop a healthy identity which is both favorable and realistic, he must be taught almost from birth about his own individuality. The many aspects of total identity include family, physical self, sex, ethnic and cultural, religious, and intellectual identity. Some major obstacles to the emergence of healthy identities include a variety of widely held cultural assumptions contrary to present-day evidence concerning the nature of child development. These assumptions, typical behaviors fostered by them, and their identity outcomes are listed in Appendix A. Forum 2 participants recommend (1) the initiation of a "Sesame Street" type of TV program for parents, which would teach child development principles and give practical suggestions for daily child care; and (2) the establishment of child-oriented environmental commissions on national and local levels, which would help plan, inspect, and improve projects which try to meet the needs of children. Additional recommendations are given in Appendix B. (NH)

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EMERGENCE OF IDENTITY: THE FIRST YEARS

Report of Forum 2

1970 White House Conference on Children

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CURRENT STATUS

What is Meant by "Emergence of Identity"

Having a sense of identity has come to mean being able to satisfactorily answer the questions, "Who am I?" and "Where am I going?" Some would add, "Where did I come from?" The "Who am I?" includes questions such as "What can I do," "What am I unable to do," "What kind of person am I," and "What is my best way of doing things?" The "Where am I going?" includes "What can I become," "What can I learn to do," "What can I not learn to do," and "What do I want to become?"

A strong sense of identity is not enough. What is needed is a healthy sense of identity that is both favorable and realistic. The following characteristics have been attributed to the person with a healthy sense of identity:

1. He is certain about his place in the world and about how to behave (Erikson, 1950, 1963, 1964, 1968).

2. He feels that he is of one piece, with an integrated rather than confused, or diffuse, self concept (D. Rogers, 1969, p. 96).

3. He has autonomy as a person and confidence in himself and is able to establish and maintain independent judgments without reference to extended sources (D. Rogers, 1969, p. 96).

4. He insists on his right to be himself rather than playing at being himself (D. Rogers, 1969, p. 96).

5. He has a high capacity for empathy and for respecting the identity of others.

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There are many types of identity -- family, ethnic and cultural, religious, political, economic, physical, sexual, and intellectual. Identity involves all aspects of a person's being. Research during the past few decades has firmly established our knowledge of the concept of the uniqueness of each individual. And more recent evidence strongly indicates that this individuality and unique identity is established in the early years.

To fully realize his human potential, each person must have a strong, healthy identity; he must recognize and acknowledge who he is and what he can become. Society, in turn, must acknowledge and respect each person's identity in the same terms. Today we fall short on both counts, often because broad discrepancies exist between common social practices and knowledge about individuality. Many children develop both unfavorable and unrealistic identities; many lack virtually any identity.

The Task of Forum 2

Forum 2 has identified some of the factors influencing the emergence of identity during the critical childhood years. Our recommendations focus on ways families and communities can more effectively facilitate the development of healthy identities among young children. Our basic assumption is that every human

being has a right to optimally develop his potentialities. Every person is unique; each has his own potentialities, goals, percepts, liabilities, and assets. Society's task is to assist "each child, without force or pressure, to grow in relationship to his uniqueness through a process that takes into account his uniqueness and makes him an acceptable and contributing member of society" (Dinkmeyer, 1965, p. 15).

How Identity Emerges in the Early Years

The term "emergence of identity" implies that in the early years a child's sense of identity comes about unaided and, in a sense, this is just what happens. Yet a multitude of things can happen to a child as he passes through the stages of identity formation to cause him to lack a sense of identity or to have an unfavorable or unrealistic sense of identity.

Initially, the infant has no sense of self; he cannot differentiate between "me" and "not me." The beginnings of a sense of self originate in the infant's countless experiments involving touch, sight, hearing, smell, and movement as he gradually realizes that things exist outside himself.

Another aspect of identity emerges as the infant's relationship to his mother changes from one based on need and need gratification (during the first six months) to one of love, largely

independent of need gratification (second six months). His sense of identity continues to emerge as he learns that his actions can elicit responses from his father and others.

By the time he masters the skill of creeping, the infant's sense of separateness is firmly established. He can now discover and rediscover objects, learning that they exist independently of his subjective experience. He begins to understand that people and things obey their own laws and not his, although he also begins to increase his skills in controlling both people and things. He begins to learn the names of things and to become more and more fully aware of himself.

By the time he is two and one-half years, he can differentiate between "I" and "you" and is ready to learn and accept his sex identity. During his third, fourth, and fifth years, he begins developing his family, ethnic, religious, economic, physical, and intellectual identities. Depending upon the nature of the child and the way his environment treats him, his learning will vary in complexity. The average three-year-old, for example, may learn little about his intellectual identity, while the intellectually gifted three-year-old who begins reading without instruction may learn a great deal about it.

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In its first series of meetings, Forum 2 identified the following major obstacles to the emergence of strong, healthy identities in the early years:

1. Deprivation (economic, psychological, social, cultural, etc.)
2. Sex discrimination and overemphasis on socially determined sex differences unrelated to sexuality
3. Ethnic, racial, and religious prejudice and discrimination
4. Taboos against acceptance of biological identity
5. Taboos against acceptance and expression of affect
6. Failure to master skills
7. Overemphasis on conformity and uniformity resulting in a discrepancy between a healthy and a functional identity.

The consensus was that a child's parents are the most important mediators of these influences, although most forum members felt that even brief contacts with the following persons may also strongly influence the emergence of identity in the early years:

1. Day care center workers
2. Workers in church nurseries and other religious organizations that work with children
3. Pediatricians and pediatric nurses
4. Child psychologists and child psychiatrists
5. Welfare workers

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6. Writers of children's books, comic strips, TV shows, films, etc.

7. Workers in community agencies

8. Architects, toy designers, environmental designers

9. Lawyers, judges, etc.

10. One step removed, teachers of personnel for nurseries, day care centers, kindergartens, and child development centers.

Forum members produced action ideas for each of these groups, which are available from the forum chairman.

In the second forum meetings, a strong realization emerged that identity in the early years is significantly affected by certain harmful cultural assumptions widespread in the United States. If our culture is to foster the emergence of a healthy identity among children, these cultural assumptions must be replaced by assumptions more congruous with existing knowledge about the nature of man and human development. Some of these cultural assumptions and possible alternatives are:

Current Cultural Assumptions	Alternate Cultural Assumptions
1. Man is innately evil.	1. Man is born neither good nor bad but with dignity and innate potential for largely determining his "human" development.
2. Heeding "inadequate" behavior motivates "adequate" behavior.	2. Attending "adequate" behavior motivates "adequate" behavior.

3. The good child is a modest child.	3. Recognition and acceptance of positive characteristics is necessary for self realization.
4. Suffering produces character and prevents spoiling.	4. Coping positively and constructively with developmental and emergency problems is healthy.
5. Independence is the behavior necessary to achieve personal and cultural competence.	5. Interdependence is the road to cultural competence and interpersonal satisfaction. Dependence is natural and healthy; it will diminish with increasing maturity.
6. Competition is a behavior innate to the nature of man. (The only way one man can rise is to best someone else.)	6. Each individual is unique and has particular strengths which must be valued.
7. There is a "superior" race and/or set of cultural characteristics to be emulated (too much difference is weakening to American way of life; male-female).	7. There is no "superior" race, sex, or set of cultural characteristics. Accept culture as pluralistic and recognize that this is its strength.
8. Parenthood is essential to male and female actualization.	8. Parenthood is only one socially acceptable life style alternative.
9. Expression of feelings demonstrates weakness.	9. Expression of feelings is essential to mental health.

A tentative listing of typical behaviors springing from each of the current and the alternate cultural assumptions and the consequences for emergence of identity is included in Appendix A.

Existing Resources and Predicted Trends

Since the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth, new resources for supporting the emergence of healthy identity in the early years have been developed and old ones have been strengthened. New movements and organizations have arisen whose missions are directly related to the emergence of healthy identities among young children. New legislation and new federal, state, and local programs have been developed which are highly relevant to such concerns.

Although empirically established information about the individuality and emergence of identity among children below age six is still scarce, significant data has been collected since 1950. Thomas, Birch, Chess, Hertzig, and Korn (1963) demonstrated that children can be identified by styles of functioning at very early ages. Their study also implies that all infants will not respond in the same fashion to the same environmental influence, that child-rearing practices have different behavioral results depending upon the child's nature. The study questions attempts to apply the same rules to all children and stresses that each child's primary reaction pattern should be understood and respected.

Chess, Thomas, and Birch (1965) cite various examples to illustrate that behavior problems and learning difficulties arise when parents and others either ignore or refuse to accept a child's characteristic ways of behaving. They also illustrate how recognition of a child's characteristic patterns of individuality may help to avoid or resolve behavior problems and learning difficulties.

Since the last White House Conference, much evidence has been accumulated concerning the impact of the child's first years of life on his later functioning. From several studies, J. McV. Hunt (1961, 1968) has assembled evidence to discredit the following concepts about the nature and measurement of intelligence:

1. A belief in fixed intelligence
2. A belief in predetermined development
3. A belief in the fixed and static, telephone-switchboard nature of brain function
4. A belief that experience during the early years, and particularly before the development of speech, is unimportant
5. A belief that whatever experience does affect later development is a matter of emotional reactions based on instinctual needs
6. A belief that learning must be motivated by homeostatic need, by painful stimulation, or by acquired drives based on one of these (Hunt, 1968, p. 294).

There is consensus that the emergence of a healthy sense of identity is damaged by continuous failure or by situations in which the child senses that he is "less than others." Although there are strong advocates of the "school of hard knocks," increasing evidence favors emphasizing a child's strengths instead of stressing his weaknesses and insisting that he overcome them (Riessman, 1962; Dinkmeyer, 1963; and Glasser, 1969).

The availability of parental identity figures (Gardner and Moriarty, 1968) seems critical in the emergence of identity. Clinicians often observe that children and adults with serious identity problems lacked such figures during childhood. Early identity patterns acquired through imitation, incorporation, and identification with parental figures, however, may impose powerful inhibitions upon subsequent activity and structural differentiation in other areas. For example, potential talents may be blocked from further development by such deep-laid self concepts.

In the 1960's, researchers and experimental educators produced vast amounts of new information concerning man's creative functioning, much of it highly relevant to the emergence of healthy identity in the early years. To summarize the accumulated knowledge about creativity among young children, Torrance (1969) offered several guidelines for helping children grow creatively while learning both individuality and interdependence:

1. Create the conditions that encourage curiosity, exploration, experimentation, fantasy, questioning, testing of limits, and the development of creative talents

2. Provide opportunities for developing the skills of creative expression, creative problem-solving, and constructive response to stress and change

3. Prepare family members for new and threatening experiences and help them develop creative ways of coping with them

4. Find ways of transforming destructive energy into constructive, productive behavior rather than relying upon punitive methods of control

5. Find creative ways of resolving conflicts between individual family member needs and the needs of other family members

6. Give every member of the family attention, respect, and opportunities to make significant, creative contributions to the welfare of the family as a whole

7. Use imaginatively what the community provides and supplement community efforts

8. Give the family purpose, commitment, and courage (Torrance, 1969, p. 59).

Another aspect of research in the 1960's focused on the child who grows up in severe economic, cultural, and educational deprivation. This research has generally emphasized the intellectual deficits of disadvantaged children, and corrective programs have been compensatory in nature. Some deficits are:

Anti-intellectual attitude

Asking few questions

Impaired auditory perception

Decelerating intellectual growth

Difficulty with the abstract

Difficulty in elaborating

Fear of ridicule

Formal language deficit

Low ability to see cause and effect

Low responsiveness to verbal stimuli

Negative self-image as learner and problem-solver

Limited vocabulary.

Following Riessman's approach of changing the negative to a positive emphasis, Torrance (1970) formulated the creative positives of disadvantaged Black children and suggested that programs be built upon them rather than on compensation of deficits. Examples of creative positive characteristics are:

Good ability to express feelings

Articulateness in creative dramatics and role-playing

Good ability to improvise with commonplace materials

Enjoyment and ability in art forms such as drawing and painting

Enjoyment and ability in creative dramatics and dance

Enjoyment and ability in music

Expressiveness in speech

Fluency and flexibility in non-verbal media (figural)

Enjoyment and skills in group learning and problem-solving

Responsiveness to the concrete

Responsiveness to the kinesthetic

Expressiveness of gestures -- "body language"

Humor

Richness of imagery in informal language

Originality of ideas in problem-solving and brain-storming

Problem-centeredness

Emotional responsiveness

Quickness of warm-up.

Woodward (1969) has presented a provocative and rather persuasive rationale for "Black Power" and "Achievement Motivation." He believes that "Black Power" is a useful conceptual framework for understanding the high achievement of those Afro-Americans who have overcome seemingly impossible odds to lead highly productive lives. Such reflections of the "Black Power" concept as James Brown's popular song, "Say it loud, I'm Black and I am proud!" has done much to foster a new kind of identity among Blacks.

The "Black is Beautiful" theme has been picked up to some extent by both the Indian and Mexican-American groups and perhaps symbolizes present thrusts of all three groups to develop a more positive identity among their young children.

Sensitive observers and young Indian leaders indicate that Indians want to conserve all that is best in their own heritage as summed up in the slogan "Integrity, Not Integration" (Time, February 9, 1970, p. 16). They say their tribal traditions give them a sense of identity, and in some tribes interest in teaching young children tribal dances and other traditions has reawakened. Some young Indians also see hunting as a way of retaining their identity, and closeness to the land also seems important. Moreover, many young Indian leaders believe that Indians have a superior way of life and a more human philosophy.

Some observers (Heller, 1970) believe that the expression "Chicano is Beautiful" is serving much the same purpose as "Black is Beautiful." Unlike Blacks, however, Mexican-Americans have fairly structured images of their past and have retained important elements of their heritage, including the language.

One manifestation of these minority group movements has been recent objections by the Blacks and Mexican-Americans that their children do not find themselves in the books produced in

the United States. Until recently, authors of children's books, history books, comic strips, and television programs treated the black, brown, and red groups as though they did not exist, and when they appeared at all, only negative stereotypes were presented. Children have received practically no information about the culture, true nature, and contributions of these groups.

Within the past two or three years, however, tremendous changes have been occurring in all media. Many basal readers, such as Ginn's Reading 360 Program, now emphasize the plurality of United States culture. Trade books for children increasingly show black, brown, and red children and their families. Heroes of these groups are also appearing in children's books in increasing numbers. Some publishers now employ ethnic consultants to review manuscripts for inaccuracies and omissions of minority group contributions. Even in comic strips, the Black child from the inner city can find himself portrayed with ethnic authenticity through Luther (Brandon, 1969, 1970), and he can also see himself in TV productions such as Sesame Street. In fact, both Luther and Sesame Street are examples of mass media that deliberately try to help young Blacks in their search for healthy identities. It remains for social scientists, educators, writers for children, toy makers, and others to support the idea of racial pride with their creative productions and research.

Paralleling these movements for more healthy racial and ethnic identities are movements designed to bring about more favorable and realistic identities for women. A major focus of these vocal movements has been to create new identities for women with accompanying changes in the treatment of females from infancy through employment, career development, and old age. Like Blacks, the militant women's organizations are changing the history books, writing children's books that change the female stereotype, and writing books about the female heroes of history.

Tied to these multiple factors affecting identity is the pervasive and increasingly important ecological environment. With the current rates of urbanization, automation, pollution, social and technological change, it is increasingly more urgent to make the environment more favorable to the emergence of healthy identity among young children. The influence that various kinds of settings have on the emergence of identity requires further study as do the effects of setting on behavior.

GOALS

Some of the consequences of our failure to give adequate attention to developing healthy identities have been delinquency

and crime, increasing rates of emotional disturbance among children, illegitimate child birth, drug abuse, and general lack of involvement in life, work, and school. Increasing numbers of young people, affluent as well as disadvantaged, are becoming dissatisfied with the existing educational and political systems. They have been joined by women, increasing numbers of militant racial minority groups, and other oppressed people. Unless these problems are dealt with, widespread violence seems imminent.

From an original list of 26 recommendations, Forum 2 distilled two fundamental recommendations chosen as the most promising. During the conference, delegates will have the option of further detailing these two recommendations, of elaborating on any of the other 20 recommendations (Appendix B of this report), or of developing new ones.

RECOMMENDATION #1

We should consciously start teaching infants and children about their own individuality. Almost from birth, a child's sense of taste and smell, his reaction to colors and forms, his way

of doing things, and his likes and dislikes of sounds will be sufficiently diverse from those of other children to be striking and revealing. If the idea of nonuniformity could be clearly demonstrated to children at an early age, acceptance of individual difference would be commonplace (Williams, 1953).

Although some parents intuitively meet the needs of their infants and children, many parents do not recognize the importance of their role in the development of their child's identity. And despite the essential nature of that parental role, the training of human beings for parenthood is left almost entirely to chance.

We, therefore, recommend that a parents' television workshop be developed. Through high-impact, easy-to-understand techniques, this Sesame Street type program would assist parents with "how-to" information and techniques on day-to-day child rearing problems; playing with, stimulating, and teaching the young child; and developing an understanding of a basic child development theory. It would also provide information on how a healthy and functional identity emerges in a child's life. The overall effect would be to help parents not only enjoy being parents, but to show them the importance of their role as good parents. In short, we must improve the image of the parent.

We suggest the television program include information on:

1. Cross-cultural differences with strict attention to accurate ethnic detail
2. The importance of parental interaction with the child in the development of identity
3. Child growth and development knowledge which should include such matters as:
   a. toilet training
   b. feeding
   c. sex
   d. dependency
   e. aggression
4. Realistic and fuller involvement of the father in child rearing
5. Managing such behaviors as:
   a. shyness
   b. biting, spitting, hitting
   c. unacceptable language
   d. physical aggression (tantrums, etc.)
6. Analyzing and evaluating cultural assumptions which underly typical parental behavior.

Implementation

Following discussion, revision, and acceptance of this recommendation at the White House Conference in December, the forum delegates propose that a "Steering Committee" be selected to

initiate immediate action. Composed of individuals with backgrounds in early childhood development, business, television production, and advertising, this six-to-eight member Steering Committee would meet immediately after the Conference to devise an initial plan of action based on the guidelines agreed to during the Conference. The action plan should include the means for:

1. Engaging a person of national prominence as sponsor for the program. His role would be to lend his personality and prominence to the plan, encourage financial sponsorship, and serve as national spokesman.

2. Developing a projected calendar of working sessions and target dates for the plan of action.

3. Obtaining an initial source of working capital. Suggested sources include the Carnegie, Kettering, or Ford Foundations, the Office of Child Development, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, K.L.H. and I.B.M.

4. Consulting experts from appropriate fields for drafting the format and content for several pilot programs.

The Steering Committee would later form an Advisory Board with a group of consultants and sponsors. Together, the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board would compose the permanent Executive Committee to govern the project. Sources of funds for underwriting this committee must be further investigated.

One approach would be to follow the pattern of the Children's Television Workshop. They brought in all their advisory people for extensive, in-depth seminars, listened to them, learned from them, and then sent them home. The Workshop people made the TV show, working closely with their own research people. Since it is difficult to make a TV show by committee, particularly a non-media committee, they should not have control of actual production.

In an effort to involve both the top talent and backing of the business community, the Executive Committee would then present the planned format and content for the new television program to:

1. Business, industry, or private foundations for long range funding
2. A management firm to commercially develop the program and work under the control of the Executive Committee
3. An advertising firm to plan a national campaign to promote the television program.

The final step involves direct preparation of the series, including production, broadcasting, development of additional services, and promotion.

1. PRODUCTION

This program must be a high quality, high entertainment show, since it will have to compete for attention. That means it will need more money, better talent, and more imagination than most "educational" programs. It must have more than a middle class, intellectually oriented audience.

If the same people watch this show as watch NET Journal, then it will be a failure. It has to be fun to watch, not talky, very visual, with a positive, upbeat image. If it ends up nicknamed "that diaper-changing show," we lose.

2. DISTRIBUTION AND UTILIZATION

a. We should try to interest the commercial networks, although they may not be interested. However, it may be possible to arrange a commercial TV preview, as was done for Kenneth Clark's Civilization series, now going on public TV.

b. Each program should get multiple showings on prime time. The same program should be repeated at least three nights each week at different times in the evening.

c. Individual local stations should be encouraged to broadcast their own, original, local follow-up or supplemental programming. For example, the local station might broadcast an "open meeting on day care," or other child development related programs in conjunction with the series. Some matching funds might be budgeted for this in the original proposal.

d. Copies of the program should be made available for secondary distribution such as closed circuit use in prenatal and well-baby clinics, lying-in hospitals, pediatricians' offices, and other places where groups of parents and expectant parents may be found. These films could also be made available to maternity wards, schools, service clubs, and any other groups or services concerned with parent education.

e. Followup materials should be made available, easily and inexpensively, for parents and teachers. These might include handbooks of play ideas, suggestions on how to make simple toys or play materials at home, or simple print or poster "reviews" of some of the ideas broadcast in each show.

f. This series could also be used as curriculum for aspects of child development courses offered in adult education, college, or even high school. This series could be "required viewing" within a child development or family life course. Using prime time TV materials within high school curricula is being experimented with currently in Chicago by an organization called Prime Time School Television, a division of Three Prong TV Productions.

g. Materials should also be developed for local children's shows (for example, Mr. Peppermint, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas) to upgrade these programs as well as to reinforce parents in living more effectively and comfortably with their children.

3. PROMOTION

As important as any other item, we must provide high quality, high level promotion including things like bumper stickers, give-aways, and perhaps a "Parenting" magazine, as well as standard media promotion and advertising. It will require very imaginative promotional thinking, best done by an in-house team, working with outside resources.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Not until recently has any active concern been expressed about what might be called ecological child psychology. In his recent book, Barker (1968) pointed out that a common view among psychologists is that "the environment of behavior is a relatively unstructured, passive, probabilistic arena of objects and events upon which man behaves in accordance with the programming he carries about within himself" (p. 4). Barker, however, proposes that the environment be viewed as "highly structured, improbable arrangements of objects and events that coerce behavior in accordance with their own dynamic patterning" (p. 4). Barker and his associates have found that they can predict some aspects of a child's behavior more adequately from behavior settings (drug-stores, playgrounds, classrooms) than from knowledge of the behavior tendencies of the particular child.

An optimum physical environment would allow the child to successfully manipulate his surroundings at any age and would also provide a variety of sensual experience. Children, however, have little say in structuring their environments, and the world remains essentially adult-centered. Consequently, we recommend that a child-oriented environmental commission be established to ensure that children's needs are not neglected by city planners, architects, and others who influence how both homes and neighborhoods are constructed. This Commission, possibly a division of Health, Education and Welfare financed by federal and local funds, could be composed of parents, pediatricians, educators, engineers, architects and builders; it could operate at national, state, or local level. The Commission would advise, help plan, inspect, and approve construction and renovation of homes, apartments, public buildings, parks, day care centers (child development centers), and streets to meet the needs of children. For example, before the construction of a new shopping center, the Commission would be responsible for consulting and advising the architects, merchants, and financiers about incorporating into the actual design of the center physical surroundings that are more stimulating to children, such as, innovative flooring material whose color and texture make it more interesting for children to walk on, small scale furniture, low level displays which are either "child proof" or may be touched by a child without being damaged. It would also advise merchants on using their

stores as learning experiences for children. A shoe store, for example, may display various types of leather which children would be invited to touch and investigate.

To further expand or improve a child's environment we recommend:

1. Organizing a children's cultural committee to help expand a child's environment to include parks, zoos, museums, libraries, and other facilities of the larger community. A directory listing all available child-oriented activities -- parks, zoos, libraries, clubs and municipal buildings -- could be collated by local civic or religious groups, publicized by volunteer media and advertising, and distributed by municipal outlets and interested commercial patrons.

2. Community centers should provide a variety of materials for children to explore and enjoy. Existing, but unused, schools or buildings can become community warehouses supplied with mechanical devices, scrap wood, clay, paper, and wheels, obtained through donations. The center could be supervised by day care centers, parents, or youth organizations.

3. Public health clinics could conduct seminars in how families can best utilize space in terms of identity formation -- stressing the importance of privacy to a child and the need for a child to have his own place, no matter how small. Public health nurses and agencies should make such information available to crowded city dwellers.

Time neither permitted the investigation of national environmental planning and legislation now underway, nor further elaboration on this recommendation. Prior to the White House Conference on Children in December these matters will be investigated and pertinent materials collated into a guide.

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SUMMARY

"Emergence of Identity" is the process by which a child learns who he is and what he can become. Just having a strong sense of identity is not enough; it must be a healthy identity which is both favorable and realistic. There are many aspects to total identity including -- family identity, physical identity, sex identity, ethnic and cultural identity, religious identity, and intellectual identity.

Current evidence indicates that a child's individuality is established in the early years, and that these years are critically important in the emergence of healthy identity. To avoid the all too common problem of children with unfavorable and unrealistic identities, or lack of identity, we must teach children almost from birth about their own individuality. If the idea of non-uniformity could be clearly demonstrated to children at an early age, acceptance of individual differences would be commonplace.

Forum 2 identified some of the major obstacles to the emergence of strong, healthy identities, including: (1) deprivation (economic, social, psychological, and cultural), (2) sex discrimination, (3) ethnic, racial, and religious biases, (4) taboos against acceptance and expression of affect, (6) failure to learn

mastery and competence, and (7) overemphasis on conformity and uniformity with a resultant discrepancy between healthy identity and functional identity. A variety of widely held cultural assumptions contrary to present-day evidence concerning the nature of child development also interfere with the emergence of healthy identity. And finally the forum considered the implications of the environment upon identity. The recommendations of this forum are designed to support parents and others who work with infants and children and to help them in encouraging healthy, strong emerging identities. These recommendations are:

1. <u>The initiation of a "Sesame Street" type of program for parents</u>, to provide a high-impact, easy-to-understand format which would assist parents with such matters as the daily tasks of baby care, playing with, stimulating, and teaching the young child. This program would become a source of educating parents to the practical uses of child growth and development knowledge, including the vital importance of how healthy and functional identity emerges.

2. <u>The establishment of child-oriented environmental commissions</u>, which could operate at national, state, and local levels, to advise, help plan, inspect, and approve projects affecting children. For example, they would be involved in meeting the needs of children in the construction and renovation of homes, apartments, public buildings, parks, day care centers, and streets: local commissions would develop activities and resources to expand and improve the environment for young children.

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APPENDIX A. CURRENT AND ALTERNATE CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS, ACCOMPANYING TYPICAL BEHAVIORS, AND IDENTITY OUTCOMES OF EACH

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 1

Current Cultural Assumption (Value)	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
Man is innately evil (Calvinistic doctrine)	Verbal and physical punishment of behavior considered "bad," such as making noise; making messes; failure to be courteous, mannerly; failure to obey	Anxiety about acceptance by others Fear of exploring Overconformity or hyperaggression and hostility Lack of trust in self as a physical being, as a social being Frustration from being given no positive behavioral model Hypermoral standards leading to negative self-concept
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Man is born neither good nor evil but with innate potential for determining in large part his "human" development	Accepting stages of development as part of normal growth in culturally accepted ways Developing love relationship between child and adult who wishes child to conform to his expectations (in terms of socially desired behavior)	Self acceptance Acceptance of others Stronger affectional bonds among peoples and nations Incentive for individual development in chosen areas

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 1 (Continued)

Alternate Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
	Reinforcing positive behaviors and dealing with "negative" behavior through: removing troubled child from situation, removing troubling situation from child, providing alternate behavior routes Providing culturally accepted ways of child's expressing such behavior as messiness, e.g., finger painting, mud play, water play (within limits of adult tolerance) Setting limits on behavior to protect child and others from harm Helping child understand and set himself limits on behavior	

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CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 2

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
Heeding "inadequate" behaviors motivates "adequate" behavior	Punishing or moralizing about "inadequate" behaviors	"Other directedness" shows child when he's doing "inadequately" Creates confusion as to what is "adequate" -- no cues Builds fear and frustration Creates poor environment for learning and healthy self-confidence Positively reinforces child who is seeking attention for deviant behavior Creates anxiety when child is developmentally unready to perform by standards considered "adequate" Restricts self-directed learning, exploratory thinking, and reinforces tendency to do only as told when told
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Heeding "adequate" behavior motivates "adequate" behavior	Rewarding and reinforcing adequate (successful) behavior, thus encouraging repetition of successful behavior	Fosters more rapid change to culturally desired behaviors Sets model of acceptable behavior

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 2 (Continued)

Alternate Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
	Explaining feelings and behaviors of others rather than chastising and moralizing	Encourages child to try further learning Opens child to continued learning Builds growing sense of confidence Encourages healthy self-direction, self-control

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 3

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
The good child is a modest child	Punishing and moralizing "above average" and superior performance	Pseudo-feeblemindedness among intellectually gifted children
	Rewarding only very limited number of kinds of excellence (athletics, memory of facts)	Unstable and confused identity
	Emphasizing conformity, obedience, and authority acceptance	Underachievement, lack of ambition
	No "testing of limits"	Lack of involvement in life, work, school
		Vocational indecision
		Inhibition of creativity
		Distorted perceptions
		Social overconformity
		Immaturity
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Recognition and acceptance of positive characteristics is necessary for self-realization	Recognizing and acknowledging many kinds of potentialities	Stable, favorable, realistic identity
	Rewarding a wide variety of abilities, skills, and achievements	Originality, creativity
	Respecting differences in ability and interest	Involvement and commitment in life, work, school
	Encouraging "testing of limits" behavior	Achievement in line with potentialities and interests
		Flexibility
		Willingness to attempt difficult and new tasks
		Changing and innovative behavior

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CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 4

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
Suffering produces character and prevents spoiling "Spare the rod and spoil the child"	Limiting (depriving) enjoyment, pacifiers, transitional objects, eating dessert, giving up toys Withholding affection, cuddling, holding, kissing Withholding praise for positive behaviors (taking these for granted) Planning failure, building expectations of failure	Inhibitions Insecurity Denial of talent, giftedness, etc.
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Coping positively and constructively with developmental and emergency problems is healthy	Preparing children to cope with predictable developmental problems and stresses of his culture	Creativeness Self-confidence Talent awareness and development

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 5

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
Independence is the behavior necessary to achieve personal and cultural competence	Refusing help to those who need it because they should have done it on their own	Psychological alienation from others
	Forcing child before ready to do tasks independently, e.g., dress self, tie shoes, not cry when hurt, pick up toys, keep room tidy, read, write, phonics, etc.	Failure to sense need of help on part of others
		Lack of empathy and sympathy
		Rejection of others (aged, incapacitated, etc.)
	Building fear of such things as walking across street, climbing trees, building blocks too high, etc.	Feelings of insecurity
		Rejection of early need to be dependent (children)
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Interdependence is the road to cultural competence and interpersonal satisfaction	Perceiving need for help and offering guidance appropriately and repeatedly when necessary	Understanding and appreciation of differences in others
Dependence is natural and acceptable in the growing child; it will diminish with greater maturity	Setting goals for independent achievements that are realistic in terms of the child's stage of development	Appreciation of the different contributions possible from people of different backgrounds
		Growing feelings of unity (cooperativeness) with others
		Psychological security from group belongingness
		Sympathy and empathy for those needing help
		Greater betterment of the society through cooperative "helping" programs

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CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 6

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
Competition is a behavior innate to the nature of man (the only way one man can rise is to best someone else)	Awarding stars to children who excel over others Holding graduation exercises for nursery school and kindergarten children Rejecting the "average" as acceptable Refusing the child's right to be wrong	Sense of failure and defeat for "losers" Inability to enjoy activities "for the fun of it," rather than "to win" Destruction of sense of mutual cooperation for individual and for group goals Somatic and psychosomatic illnesses Seeing others only as persons to be surpassed
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Each individual is unique and has particular strengths which must be valued	Establishing interdependence with others as a philosophical position and a way of life Encouraging greater tolerance for individual differences Recognizing and promoting each child's uniqueness Rewarding achievement in relation to individual goals and capacities Rejecting absolute standards of development for entire chronological age group Accepting range of capacities and potentials	Self acceptance View of self as part of larger social system and acceptance of group responsibility Greater sense of responsibility to help others actualize Greater acceptance of areas of life and groups (Indians) who do not incorporate competition in "the system"

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CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 7

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
There is a "superior" race and/or set of cultural characteristics to be emulated (too much difference is weakening to the American way of life; male-female)	Rejecting others on basis of differences (color, sex, religion) Rejecting "deviant" vocabulary and language (bilingual programs) Refusing to let boys cry, show affection; boys are superior because they show less feeling Teaching girls to be passive-dependent, non-high achievers Setting low expectations for minority children Teachers less acceptant of creative children, boys, dominant, aggressive behavior	Feelings of inferiority, worthlessness Higher rates in areas such as welfare, unemployment, and jails Riots, withdrawal from society, Black Muslims Encouragement of radicalism Low educational level with related social problems Women feel inferior, withdraw sex, resent what men do Worthlessness in productive society Feelings of inferiority fulfilling of hypotheses Repression of creativity, fostering of conformity
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
There is no "superior" race, sex, or cultural characteristic Acceptance of our pluralistic culture as one of its major strengths	Encouraging all races and ethnic groups to share their assets Valuing cultural pluralism Encouraging speaking of other languages in school; bilingual education; bicultural education	Feelings of self worth Feeling of investment and achievement in larger society Strengthening of larger culture with values of subcultures

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 7 (Continued)

Alternate Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
	Respecting nonworkers and unemployed mothers	
	Teachers not threatened by creative or bright children	
	Valuing literacy in foreign languages	

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 8

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
Parenthood is essential to male and female actualization	Encouraging early marriage and parenthood Devaluing non-parents in politics, nursing, teaching, via non-promotion Considering unmarried men and women "weird"	Feelings of guilt and/or shame by unmarried men and women Rejection of pleasure in parenthood Abuse of children in "poor" home settings Frustrations of parents about child-rearing responsibilities
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Parenthood is only one socially acceptable life style alternative	Permitting women to choose careers instead of, or in addition to, children Encouraging the birth only of wanted children	Sense of freedom of choice

CULTURAL ASSUMPTION 9

Current Cultural Assumption	Typical Behaviors	Identity Outcomes
Expression of feelings demonstrates weakness	Valuing the cool, calm (detached) individual (silent majority)	Inability to communicate in close personal relationship
	Teaching children not to cry when hurt	Inability to resolve difficult and painful reaction, leading to unhealthy repression
	Not taking children to funerals or discussing death	
	Not touching others	Inability to experience spontaneous healthy impulses
	Rejecting expressions of anger and fear	
	Seeing as personal "weakness" expressions of ecstasy, depression	Outbreak of repressed conflicts in both parent and child
		Somatic symptoms
Alternate Cultural Assumption		
Expression of feelings is essential to mental health	Letting children experience whatever happens in death, illness, etc.	Realistic views of life and spontaneous reaction to it
	Allowing children to express fear, pain, anger	Consistent availability of emotional channels
	Teaching children to express negative feelings in words in addition to action	Reduction of violence as outlet

APPENDIX B. ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural Assumptions and "Emergence of Identity"

1. Develop a public education program to emphasize the positive and unique aspects of color, racial, cultural, and sexual differences. Through tax incentives to businesses and through public and philanthropic agencies, educational projects could be instituted, such as: television series and specials, public service announcements (TV or radio "spots"), and cultural awareness conferences, workshops, and seminars.

2. Provide HEW with funds to make grants and fellowships available for males who will enter preparatory programs leading to employment in children's programs (day care centers, nursery schools). Public education efforts will be necessary to make male involvement in this work culturally acceptable.

3. Encourage organized religious groups to emphasize the positive aspects of man and his behavior rather than his sinfulness and develop church literature programs emphasizing the negative outcome of "sin-oriented" approaches to religion. Seminaries should also be urged to include training in psychological and sociological understanding, and to emphasize the needs of children in developing a positive self-image.

4. Reform the welfare system so that receiving welfare payments is perceived more positively through greater recipient involvement in determining welfare policies and procedures and through developing strategies to help recipients become

self-sustaining. The general public should also be made aware of the recipient's world, the consequences of not helping the poor, and the need for a guaranteed income.

Parental Influence and Child Development

5. Establish required child development courses in schools for both boys and girls to include some actual work with young children and the study of other cultures.

6. Mobilize community resources to provide prenatal and postnatal parent education. Such programs could be provided by clinics/hospitals, the YMCA, adult education in schools, and churches.

7. Establish community assistance centers -- child drop-off centers -- to occasionally relieve parents. Instead of paying for the service, parents would supplement the resident professional staff with their volunteer time. Industry and business might cosponsor such centers.

8. Parents should be actively involved in the planning and operation of day care centers. Such centers should be developed to supplement, not replace, the parent/child relationship and permit the child to spend part of his day with his parents (particularly if he is under three).

9. Mothers who need the funds but prefer not to work out of the home should be paid a salary as mothers. They could be given tax benefits, social assistance, or a direct wage for a certain number of children and until they reach a certain age.

10. Institute special training programs for foster parents and neighbors providing regular day care to the children of working parents.

11. Encourage fathers to play a more active role in child rearing and to participate in early child education programs. The use of the mass media could help rid child rearing of its feminine image and suggest means of father involvement. Industry might support this effort by sponsoring paternal leaves for new fathers and "fathers' days" at work to permit children to learn about their fathers' jobs.

12. Couples should not, in any way, feel culturally pressured to have children; however, couples who assume this responsibility should be encouraged to interrupt their full-time jobs at any time until the child is three years old. To facilitate this, industry should permit both childbearing and child rearing leaves for mothers and fathers.

13. All who deal with children in any capacity -- schools, day care centers, etc. -- should receive special training in relating to, learning from, and helping parents in their child rearing efforts.

The Environment

14. Encourage the editors of such publications as Good Housekeeping and Better Homes and Gardens to consider child development more carefully in presenting home decorating ideas. They should, for example, consider a child's traffic patterns and play requirements.

15. Broaden the child's exposure to things associated with both "masculinity" and "femininity."

16. Endorse the block mother program as set up by schools or city government.

17. Give the children more opportunity to interact directly with television. TV is an enormous source of information and stimuli with great potential for promoting constructive activities and learning experiences for children.

18. Utilize the mass media -- TV, radio, press -- for commercial "spots" on parent education.

19. Amass and widely disseminate information on how ghetto families can make the best and most creative use of their limited resources and the resources of their environment -- such as making a three-room house serve the needs of a family of ten, providing study space for children under crowded conditions, and communicating the availability of free materials and free recreational facilities.

20. Organize groups or use existing church or civic groups to help disadvantaged families broaden their experiences by arranging trips to zoos, parks, museums, and other public facilities or areas.

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